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THE FLORENTINES



·MAURICE·V·SAMUELS·

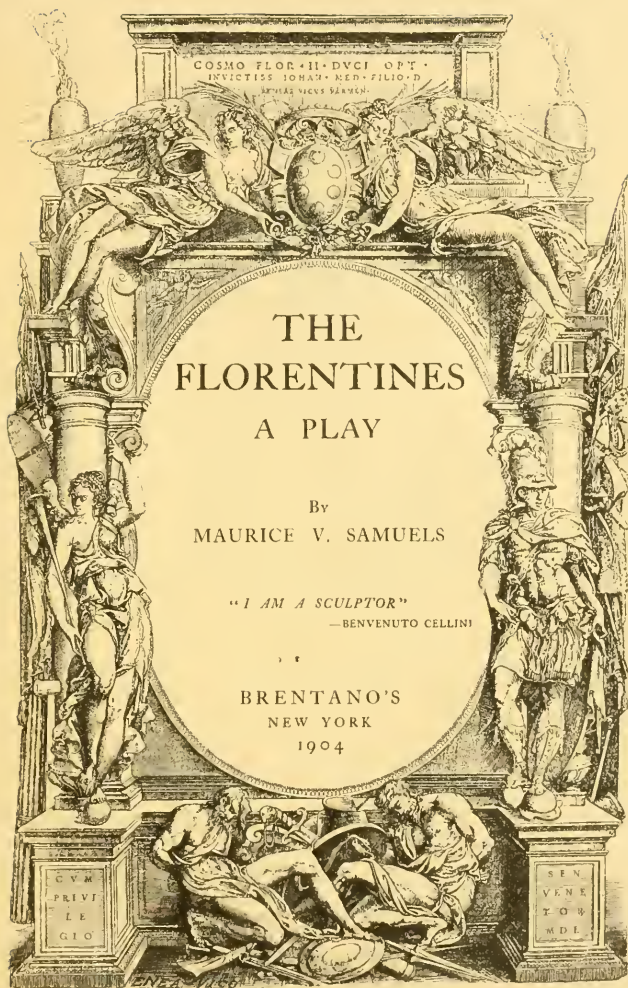


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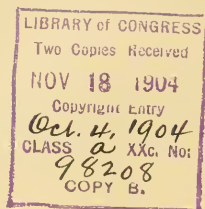
THE
FLORENTINES
A PLAY

By
MAURICE V. SAMUELS

"I AM A SCULPTOR"
—BENVENUTO CELLINI

BRENTANO'S
NEW YORK
1904

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TO MY PARENTS



IN those dark periods of self-distrust,
When Inspiration, sleeping, seems away,
And Night refuses promise of the Day,
If then we toil, 'tis only that we must,
And not because we know that All is just,
Or that the struggling Self is more than clay,
Ill-fitted and faint-hearted for the fray
Which offers, tho' we conquer, but Life's crust.
What then recalls the courage that we miss?
What holds our Faith alive and gives us power
To trample thicket and to wing abyss?
'Tis that eternal, never wasting dower:
The trust of those who love us. It is this
That turns our empty time to fruitful hour.

October 3, 1904

CHARACTERS

BENVENUTO CELLINI	<i>At Forty-five</i>
COSIMO DÉ MEDICI	<i>Duke of Florence</i>
MARSILIO GIOTTO	<i>Cellini's Apprentice</i>
BACCIO BANDINELLO	<i>A Rival of Cellini</i>
ALFONSO DA TROTTI	<i>A Gentleman of Florence</i>
PIER FRANCESCO RICCIO	<i>Major Domo to the Duke</i>
GIOVAN BATTISTA	} . . . <i>Artists, friends of Cellini</i>
JACOPO PONTORMO	
LELIO TORELLO	
VITTORIO	<i>Bargello of Florence</i>
THE DUCHESS OF FLORENCE	<i>Wife of Cosimo Dé Medici</i>
LADY LEONORA RUCELLAI	<i>Her Friend and Cosimo's</i>

Ward

A Soldier

Time of Play, 1545

Place : FLORENCE

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

SCENE I.—*Dining-hall in the house of PONTORMO, the painter. (Afternoon.)*

SCENE II.—*Garden of Palace of DUKE COSIMO. (Evening of the same day.)*

ACT II

SCENE I.—*Workshop and Studio of CELLINI. (A few days later.)*

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Palace. (Ten minutes afterward.)*

ACT III

Another Room in the Palace. (Five weeks have elapsed.)

ACT I

SCENE I.—*Dining-hall in the house of JACOPO PONTORMO, a Painter, in Florence. It is about four in the afternoon. In gay attire, all (PONTORMO and his guests) are seated about a table. The repast completed, a servant is kept busy refilling glasses.*

Discovered : JACOPO PONTORMO, GIOVAN BATTISTA, young and light-hearted. ALFONSO DA TROTTI, a gallant of sixty. LELIO TORELLO, the husband of an intellectual woman. BACCIO BANDINELLO, cold and precise. (*At table drinking, and talking boisterously.*)

DA TROTTI (*rising and keeping his feet with some difficulty, in heroic attitude*)

Friends, liken me unto an argosy,
Still stanch and daring, tho' I rock and reel
In this mad tumult of a reddened sea.

TORELLO

Da Trotti is a poet!

BATTISTA

In his cups!

DA TROTTI

Behold me grappled by a pirate crew,
Who would extort my most unwilling story!

TORELLO

Oh, tell your tale curtailed ! Who is the lady ?

BANDINELLO

Aye, we would toast her, beauty or no beauty.

DA TROTTI

Your interruptions are the wintry blasts,
Too sudden and tempestuous for welcome.
I sail too boldly, too much canvas spread,
For me to reach a port—

*[In gesticulating, he pushes his chair from
its place, and pauses, confused.]*

BATTISTA (*forcing him into the chair*)

Or seat in safety !

BANDINELLO (*rising*)

Could I forego my common sense for diction,
I would declare that you have navigated
Full quite as many oceans, and have crossed
Not one less bar than some gay gondola,

Painted and gilded, fragile as a leaf,
Has, in the streets of Venice. (*Scornfully*) Argosy!

[*He sits down.*]

DA TROTTI (*angrily*)

You, sir, resemble more some fisher's craft,
Filled high with cold and clammy and dead
things.

PONTORNO

Come, come, our cups await!

BATTISTA

My throat's a furrow
That, parched and aching, craves refreshing
draught.

DA TROTTI

Well, then, your ears! Since each has told his
story

Of rare good fortune found 'mid gracious ladies,
Shall I prove recreant to Aphrodite,
Deny that I am young enough for favors?

BANDINELLO

If you would have us all believe, Da Trotti,
Your ripened years can move soft hearts to love
Rather than to derision, specify!

DA TROTTI

Her name! Why, gentlemen, there's more than one!

So many truly that I scarce recall
Which was the last to turn sweet glance upon
me.

TORRELO (*laughing*)

A connoisseur who knows not gems apart,
Although he boasts so goodly a collection.

BANDINELLO (*coldly*)

'Tis but evasion. Give the lady's name!

DA TROTTI (*defiantly*)

Well, 'twas Cassandra Mantuano, friends!

BANDINELLO (*scornfully*)

Da Trotti won Cassandra Mantuano!

DA TROTTI (*angrily*)

Believe it as you will. I know the truth.

[*Some confusion outside. Enter CELLINI
and MARSILIO, L. 2. E. All show
pleasure but BANDINELLO.*]

CELLINI

Count it rare fortune that you now behold me!

[MARSILIO *mingles with others, who have
risen and surround them.*

TORELLO

Good Benvenuto, was she dark or fair?

CELLINI

Dark, being bronze! That impatient Duke, you
see,

Was so enamored of a vase I cast

For his good Duchess that he kept me prisoner—

Yes, held me thus (*grasping his own doublet*)
until I gave my promise

That I would work to-morrow on its mate.

[*Sinking into a chair.*

Oh! What a thing it is to be an artist!

(*Very seriously*) Do you know, friends, I seldom
get my sleep!

PONTORMO

Forget your labors. Try some warm Chianti!

[CELLINI *drinks.*

Ha! Good! Your friend, Marsilio! Most wel-
come.

DA TROTTI

Now here's a man who cannot match one summer
'Gainst two of mine—a very young man, this!

BATTISTA

Say three, Da Trotti, and be nearer truth.

DA TROTTI

Well, then, smiles greeted me ere you were born!
So be it! I suppose 'tis safe to say
You credit his all inexperienced youth
With triumphs you deny maturity.
Again, so be it! What you do not know
You lack the wit to know you do not know.

BATTISTA (*addressing* MARSILIO)

You come in time to make your contribution,
So that, according to the splendid custom
Of this Society of Mirth Provokers,
We may congratulate a fellow member
And incidentally regale our ears.

MARSILIO

What is it you require? Call it done.

CELLINI

These rascals, whom the foolish folk of Florence
[*Pointing to each.*]

Call artists, men of letters—and poor wits—
Make it a rule, my dear Marsilio,
At these reunions, in the name of friendship,
To tell what pretty feat of archery
With Cupid's arrow they have last achieved.
'Tis sad we come so late!

DA TROTTI

In other words,

It is our pleasing method to describe
The fair ones who have yielded to our spells
And thus to share delight.

[Moves unsteadily.]

MARSILIO (*coldly*)

'Tis new to me,

And I shall ask permission to be silent.

CELLINI

These are my friends. And this requirement
Is quite a simple one, and very just.
Shall Pleasure have his fill, and then deny
Companionship the mere description of it?
Marsilio, this is no case for scruple!
I would not blame you for such reticence

If friends should ask the secret of some art
To bring the lustre to a deadened stone,
Or of original sword-pass for defense,
Or of ingenious method to cast metal—

[*Turning to others.*

And, by the way, Cellini's not a goldsmith—
However famed the balance of his days—
Who shrinks from the high labor of the sculptor!

PONTORMO (*cordially*)

Why should you not, Cellini, match your skill
'Gainst Michael Angelo's?

BATTISTA

Your blood is warmer

[*With wave for a toast.*

And your imagination—well—Cellini !

[*They drink.* BANDINELLO *merely pretends to do so.*

DA TROTTI (*pointing to MARSILIO, who sits moodily apart*)

The youth! I'll wager that he has been looking
Too long into the depths of violet eyes (*as if seeing such in the air before him*),

Or blue, or gray, or brown—they're much alike!—
Too long, I say, for—what was it I meant?
Mine host, Pontormo, 'tis a heady wine—

[*Supporting himself by hand on chair.*

Da Trotti, now you have your wits again!
Young man, stand up, and with great eloquence
Tell us—well, tell of your last love affair!

[*Sinks into chair.*

BATTISTA

Or we'll expel you from our company—
The gayest wits, the lightest hearts of Florence.

[*Cordial endorsement of sentiment.*

CELLINI (*modestly*)

And some there are who are not without fame.

[*All laugh and nod approvingly, except*

BANDINELLO.

Praise me not overmuch. (*Very seriously*) Heaven
aids me.

PONTORMO.

Which proves the Lord is very merciful
To confessed sinners, gallant Benvenuto!

DA TROTTI (*with a sweeping gesture*)

I am the only man in this assemblage
Who can remember what he wants! The story!

TORELLO (*turning to MARSILIO*)

Aye, who is she? And when and where did
you

Encounter her? And is she a brunette,
Or has she eyes like our Italian sky?
And is her hair as tawny as the lion's
The King of Portugal sends to the Pope?

[MARSILIO *risés protestingly*.

BANDINELLO (*rising and waving MARSILIO
down*)

Pray take your seat, Marsilio, and I
Who have done honor to my latest triumph
Shall furnish you criteria of beauty
Before you venture to portray her. Here!

[*Pompously displaying manuscript*.

Behold! Notes of Firenzuola's lecture
On Female Beauty, given at a gathering
Of wives and daughters of learned Florentines.

[*All manifest incredulity*.

TORELLO

I have no doubt my wife was there. But who
Gave memoranda to cold Bandinello?

BANDINELLO

Bandinello!

TORELLO

Why, you cannot mean—
You heard a lecture meant for ladies only?

BANDINELLO

Just so! I thought it might prove interesting.
I borrowed clothes from Pantasilea—

[CELLINI *starts angrily.*

(*Tauntingly*) Nay, nay, Cellini! There are
others favored!

And then some rouge, some paste, a dainty per-
fume,

Affected walk, a manner supercilious,

A mood of silence—and I heard the lecture!

[*Much merriment.*

BATTISTA

Firenzuola! That great theorist!

Methinks I could deliver such a discourse.

BANDINELLO

Firenzuola said—

TORELLO

How long is it?

BATTISTA

Epitomize !

DA TROTTI

We want Marsilio's tale !

BANDINELLO (*annoyed by interruptions, and referring to memorandum*)

The hair—thick, long, and silky. Skin—

TORELLO

Peach-like!

BANDINELLO

No ; clear and light, but not dead white. The eyebrows—

Dark and silky, middle strongly marked—

CELLINI (*authoritatively*)

But shading off—

BANDINELLO (*coldly*)

Yes, toward the ears and nose.

The whites o' the eyes just faintly tinged with blue.

BATTISTA

The eyes themselves—not the protruding kind?

BANDINELLO

Large, full, well-formed; the color—each his taste!
The lids—

DA TROTTI

What of the lids? I like the languid sort.

BANDINELLO

White save for red veins most invisible—
The hollow round the eye—

TORELLO

Alas! the morning!

BANDINELLO

Should show the color of the cheek. The ears
With edge of a transparent ruddiness—

DA TROTTI

Like pomegranates—

TORELLO

Hush, old reprobate!

DA TROTTI

You speak of years as if they checked experience!

BANDINELLO (*emphatically*)

Firenzuola said the nose—

BATTISTA

Is Greek !

CELLINI (*thoughtfully*)

But not too straight for strength—

BATTISTA

Like mine !

BANDINELLO (*rapidly, to prevent interruption*)

Should recede gently and most uniformly.

But where the cartilage comes to an end

An elevation there may be, if slight,

And yet the nose must not be aquiline.

The mouth—

DA TROTTI (*longingly*)

What of the mouth?—that glorious throne of
Love !

BANDINELLO

Since sometimes, by an accident, 'tis open,

Care must be taken lest more than six teeth

Should be revealed.

DA TROTTI (*disgusted*)

Firenzuola 's stupid !

BANDINELLO

The lips—

DA TROTTI

Ah, now give something worth the hearing !

BANDINELLO (*maliciously*)

Should never be too thin.

TORELLO (*chuckling*)

My wife heard that !

BANDINELLO

A dimple—

CELLINI (*thoughtfully*)

'Tis an adjunct! Not essential!

BANDINELLO

But welcome, says my lecturer, as is

The tempting smile that sometimes lights the
corner—

The left—of a small mouth—

BATTISTA (*dissentingly*)

Why always small ?

TORELLO (*as one of experience*)

To hide, if but a moment, ample tongue.

BANDINELLO (*much annoyed*)

Who heard Firenzuola, you or I?

[*Hurries along.*

The chin is most important—should be round,
Not pointed, not curved outward, ever growing
Reddened a trifle as it rises. The shoulders—

DA TROTTI (*rising to his feet*)

What of the shoulders? Hearken! My opinion—

CELLINI

Is based on mere conjecture.

TORELLO

And hence useless.

[*Pulling him down.*

DA TROTTI

Well, I know things! But never mind, I'm old!

BANDINELLO

My notes are blurred. No matter. Now the
hands!

DA TROTTI

How you digress. I would that I had heard
The treatise!

BATTISTA

Ah! if you had heard, Da Trotti!

BANDINELLO (*hurriedly*)

The hand, white toward the wrist, but large and
plump

And soft as velvet. Then the space between
The forefinger and thumb must not show
wrinkles.

The pointed fingers that some prize so highly
He does not like. Well, have I said enough?

DA TROTTI (*indignantly*)

Should you leave out the best part of the lecture—
Stop where you should commence?

CELLINI (*irritatingly*)

He does—in art!

BANDINELLO (*excitedly*)

I'll have you know, you boasting blusterer,
That Bandinello does not see a rival
In such a so-called artist as Cellini!

CELLINI

Thank God there are in Florence men who can
Appreciate my work! But Bandinello's—
Bah! 'Tis good wine (*drinks*); I must not spoil
the flavor.

PONTORMO (*quickly*)

Come, come, we are all friends! No feeling
here!

Let Florence judge now, and Posterity
When we are—where we shall be.

[*All laugh.*

Drink—to Art!

CELLINI

The only mistress really worth the loving!

BATTISTA

The Goddess who has made our Florence—Florence!

DA TROTTI (*hand on heart*)

The means whereby the Beauty that I love
May some day show her face to others. Drink!

[*All drink.*

TORELLO

I think good wine is Art personified.

DA TROTTI

What scat'ring brains are here! Only Da Trotti
Sober, or thus inspired, never fails—
To know what he desires. Here's a youth

Who sits in moodiness and makes no speeches.
Have you forgotten he owes us confession ?

CELLINI (*throwing an arm about MARSILIO*)

What ails you, boy ? You leave your wine untasted !

PONTORMO

We are a merry set in Florence. Drink !
Think joyous thoughts ! Care vanished long ago !
Pleasure and Art combined their strength against
her

And drove her out of Italy ! Marsilio,
Would you expel her memory ? Chianti !

DA TROTTI

Or, better, tell us all about the lady—
For there is one, or I am an old fool.

BATTISTA

Say “ And,” Da Trotti—“ And,” not “ Or ” !
Say “ And ” !

DA TROTTI

Ah, now I think of it ! A noble lady
To whom I paid some compliments last week
Inquired your name as you saluted us.
Is she the one, Marsilio ? I yield her.

TORELLO

And I know one who threw you tempting glances
There at the Baths.

CELLINI

And there are many others.
My fair friends quite neglect me for Marsilio.
Upon my faith, were there not more in Florence,
I might grow jealous of my new apprentice!

BANDINELLO

Well, is it one of us you have succeeded?

MARSILIO (*starting indignantly*)

It is intolerable, gentlemen,
That you refer to her thus lightly. Cease!

[TORELLO and BATTISTA nod approvingly.]

DA TROTTI

Ah! When we're young, at least then we have
faith.

PONTORMO

(*loudly, to distract attention from MARSILIO*)
'Tis said the noble lady, Laura Vinci,
Writes passionate letters—and to whom, think
you?

BATTISTA (*interested*)

Who *is* the favored man?

PONTORMO (*laughingly*)

Her husband. Fancy!

CELLINI (*cynically*)

Quite an example! Should too many follow,
An end to Merriness! Bah! there's no danger!

DA TROTTI (*rising and pointing*)

Marsilio, the story! Story! story!

MARSILIO (*rising*)

You force me to it. For I have no heart—

TORELLO

Of course not, it is in her custody.

MARSILIO

To speak of her to you.

BANDINELLO (*starting up*)

You are a stranger!

And otherwise, friends, is this not affront?

[*Reaches for his sword.*]

BATTISTA

Bandinello, if you want some sword play,
My friend Cellini—

CELLINI (*drawing his blade*)

Has in mind the judgment
You passed upon his skill before the Duke!

PONTORMO (*stepping between belligerents*)
The man who picks a quarrel drinks three bot-
tles!

[*All draw swords, laughing.*]

DA TROTTI

How can he tell it while you keep up wrangling?

TORELLO

Silence and peace! We'll hear Marsilio!

MARSILIO (*rising*)

I do a wrong to speak—

PONTORMO

You compliment her!

MARSILIO

Do you remember, Benvenuto, what
You said to me about an aureole
You chanced to notice haloing your brow?

[CELLINI *nods, pleased.*]

A luminous ring, a circle of soft light,

Much like the glory we ascribe to men
Who dedicate their lives to saintliness.

CELLINI (*very serious*)

'Tis there ! And it is strange, surpassing strange,
That I alone can see it. For 'tis there !

BANDINELLO (*mockingly*)

The favorite of Heaven ! See ! Cellini !

[*Friends quiet* CELLINI.]

MARSILIO (*pleasantly*)

Having in mind the thought it might appear
To you—and you alone—but as result
Of light reflected on the dewy grass—

CELLINI (*indignantly*)

Why, nonsense, man, 'tis something spiritual !

MARSILIO

I spent an idle hour upon a roof,
Where a good friend of mine enjoys his garden,
Observing how the sun can cause such marvels.

CELLINI (*anxiously*)

And you believe—

MARSILIO

The halo's light reflected.

CELLINI (*disgustedly*)

Fool Science ! I believe what I believe !

MARSILIO (*inspirationally*)

Then suddenly I saw no aureole,
No azure sky, no flowers at my feet;
It seemed as if the Goddess Aphrodite,
Fearing her shrines and not herself were wor-
shipped,

Had snatched the beauties from the universe,
Resolved to wear them for her own adornment.
And then, that she might manifest to mortal,
Had merged her being with an earthly maiden's !
There in the sunlight, on a neighboring roof,
I saw such marvelous vision that could one
Who for his sins must face perpetual torment
Behold it ere he died, then in the fires of Hell
He would believe himself in Paradise.

CELLINI (*sharply to BANDINELLO, who starts to interrupt*)

Bandinello, if you interrupt him
With sour saying, I shall make of you
No more than a distasteful memory.

BANDINELLO (*to MARSILIO, irritably*)

Proceed.

MARSILIO

Perhaps just stepping from her bath,
She wore a simple gown of purest white
That draped yet half revealed her form, as is
So wonderfully done by Angelo—

CELLINI (*enthusiastically*)

A man to whom Cellini might be debtor !

MARSILIO

Enthralled, I gazed upon her. I have seen
The beautiful of Este, Naples, Florence.
Compeer with her cannot be found among them !
All unexpected came a gust of wind.
Protestant that such beauty should be hidden,
It swept the garment, loosening the brooch
That held it as a cloud about her form.
The little maid who held her moistened hair
To mesh the golden sunlight, let it fall
And gazed no less in rapturous admiration.

DA TROTTI

Had I but studied aureoles, companions !

MARSILIO

Such was Love's incarnation. Swift she caught
The yielding fabric, and replaced the brooch.
Then she saw me. I gazed into her eyes.
The body, model for Firenzuola,
Lost its apparent beauty when compared
To the pure soul light in her dreamy eyes.
That too I saw revealed ! And it is that,
Too marvelous to paint in words or colors,
That prompts me to declare in all the world
(challengingly)
There is no other like her !

DA TROTTI *(quietly)*

I once knew one
Like that ! She died ! Well, never mind—go on.

MARSILIO

Diana must have looked at Acteon
As she at me. And yet in her dismay
And indignation was an element
I cannot analyze. Across my eyes
[Slowly drawing hand across eyes.]
I drew my hand, and stepped down from the
garden.

I thought she did the same, for on my mind
Is vividly impressed an arm of coloring
So exquisite that Rafaello fails
To match its tint—an arm of mould most faultless!

CELLINI (*excitedly*)

The arm! Talk more of that! I have my reason.

MARSILIO

What language makes perfection still more perfect?

DA TROTTI (*enthusiastically*)

Now we must toast that lady. Give her name!

CELLINI (*excitedly*)

Yes, quickly that! Marsilio, I want it.

MARSILIO

No! No! I have already said too much.

[*A servant enters with letters on a salver,
and proceeds to distribute them among
the guests.*]

PONTORMO

Lest you should hasten, friends, back to your
lodgings,

Desirous of perusing messages
From fair ones who would claim the evening,
I sent my servant on the rounds, and here
Behold the notes that waited you at home.

[*All laugh.*]

BANDINELLO (*importantly, as he glances at the one
given to him*)

An urgent message from the Duke of Florence.

[*Looking at CELLINI.*]

So generous a patron must not wait !

[*Exit L. 2. E.*]

CELLINI (*pushing his letter aside unopened—exasperated*)

It makes me protest in the name of Art
To see how Cosimo wastes golden ducats
On Bandinello's miserable statues.

DA TROTTI (*with affected calmness*)

I deem myself excused if I depart
In haste. This will explain. Fare ye as well !

[*Throwing letter, open, upon table. Exit*

DA TROTTI, L. 2. E.

TORELLO (*reading it aloud*)

“Alfonso Da Trotti is too gallant a gentleman to keep the impatient Imperia waiting one minute after the fifteenth hour—at her home.”

CELLINI (*taking the note*)

Let me see that. It is as I suspected!

That “I,” that “T”! It is Da Trotti’s hand!

And what an inartistic penman! He

Goes to his home, the while Imperia—

TORELLO (*reading his note*)

Meets me! The very one by whom I’m summoned.

[*Exit TORELLO, L. 2. E. BATTISTA, picking up several in disgust, tears them up unopened*]

CELLINI

You seem to know their contents.

BATTISTA

I suppose

I’d better go and pay them all—in promises.

These merchants! How they put a man to trouble!

[*Exit BATTISTA, L. 2. E. Servant whispers to PONTORMO.*]

PONTORMO (*looking disturbed*)

By all means, one more glass before you go.

CELLINI

Before we go ! I wonder who's in there !

[*Points to door.*]

Nay, nay, Pontormo ! Leave us. We forgive you.

Marsilio and I would speak awhile.

[*Exit PONTORMO, R. 3. E.*]

CELLINI (*very earnestly*)

Marsilo, 'twas never meant by Nature
That I should be a goldsmith all my days,
(*Thoughtfully*) Tho' 'tis a craft most honorable,
and one

Which wins the friendship of the Pope himself,
And brings me means to live and great renown.
(*Proudly*) But I, the friend of Michael Angelo—
He ranks me high, and he is a good judge—
Have loftier ambitions, as you know.
For through and through I am an artist. Even
(*Confidentially*) In that accursed music I am a
genius.

(*Enthused*) But sculpture ! There in marble to
record,

Forever, the great skill of Benvenuto
Cellini—that is worthy of me ! That
Is what Nature intended me to do !

MARSILIO (*heartily*)

Beyond a question ! Would that I could serve
you !

For, Benvenuto, none to friendship truer
Than you ! When as a refugee I came
Friendless to Florence, your inventive mind
Suggested the disguise which makes me safe
From spies and from assassins. In your service—
Apprentice to the foremost goldsmith living,
(*Graciously*) Who will be foremost sculptor—who
would guess

Marsilio Giotto is the heir—

CELLINI (*warningly*)

On guard ! One knows not what his shadow
hears !

Well, now's your chance to serve me, for I know
You love me well, as I do you. That girl (*petu-
lantly*)

Federiga, tho' she postures well—
I never had a better model or
A more affectionate one—has such an arm
'Twould ruin me to copy it. I want
The arm you saw, and hence the lady's name.

MARSILIO (*starting back in dismay*)

What! She pose as your model! She your
model!

The chain that binds me to you has each link
Of love or gratitude, or your suggestion,
Your barest thought of such a consummation,
Would snap it in the instant!

CELLINI

You refuse me?

MARSILIO

Put me to any other supreme test!
Cellini, ask me anything but that!

CELLINI (*loftily*)

Surely the company of Benvenuto
Cellini is a thing some lovely women
Have not regarded with disfavor. But
I need not argue that. My reputation—

MARSILIO (*in a friendly manner*)

As loyal friend, as artist's soul embodied,
As the one man who is—Cellini! Yes,
All that I know, as does all Italy.
But as the man in whom a woman can
Place trust—

CELLINI (*checking MARSILIO with a gesture*)

It is but my experience
With them that causes me so to regard
All but my mother and my stupid sister.
Bah! Shall a woman stand 'twixt such good
friends?

'Tis but the arm I want. 'Twill be a statue
That in a thousand years men will admire
As the great work of a God-favored sculptor!
(*enthusiastically*).

The very arm, so perfectly proportioned,
Will win a thought, a kind one, for the model—
More than return for favors she may grant
To you, Marsilio. I want the arm!
But that, upon my soul. Tell me the name!

MARSILIO

Impossible. I should not. (*Resolutely*) More, I will not!

CELLINI (*much displeased*)

Between Marsilio and Benvenuto
Shall there be enmity? It all depends!

[*Reads the note addressed to him, heretofore neglected*]

MARSILIO (*aside*)

I know well what that means. But she a model!
Would she accede tho' asked by Benvenuto?

CELLINI (*reads aloud*)

“ If Benvenuto Cellini values the friendship of one who will remain his generous (*doubtfully*) patron as long as he will lend his genius (*greatly pleased*) to Florence, he will come at once to the Palace, for we would place in his hands for immediate setting a royal stone, intended as a gift to (*piously*) His Holiness the Pope.—COSIMO, Duke of Florence.”

MARSILIO

Cosimo!

[CELLINI *looks at him watchfully.*]

CELLINI

Ha! He starts. Cosimo's ward!

MARSILIO (*eagerly*)

Take me with you, Cellini ; I would meet
The noble Duke. Some day we may be allies,
When I recover my lost—

CELLINI (*triumphantly*)

Loved one!

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—*Garden of the Palace of Cosimo, Duke of Florence. A splendid stairway (L.) leads into the Palace, which can be also entered below the same. A statue of Hercules and Cacus in right foreground. Trees, and fountain in center of stage. A bench beneath one of the trees.*

Discovered: Near statue of Hercules and Cacus, BANDINELLO, irritated, addressing PIER FRANCESCO RICCIO, Major Domo to Duke. The latter is young and is gayly attired.

BANDINELLO (*making vicious passes with his sword*)

Think you, Pier Riccio, there breathes
The air of Florence such a fencing-master
As could teach me some well-devised passado
Certain to be unknown to this Cellini?
I would far rather bear the plague's foul scars
Than hear his brags and face his swaggerings.
I'd risk it now—but how that devil fences!

RICCIO

He knows them all! But, noble Bandinello,
Why jeopardize your person? For ten ducats,
Or even less, some quick Sicilian dagger
Would end his boasting.

BANDINELLO

It is worth reflection.
Meanwhile, I like you, Riccio. Take this.

[Handing him a gold piece.]

'Twill buy a smile for you from Federiga.

RICCIO

Time was I gave no gold for them. But now
The girl points nose to sky while I waste words
Upon her beauty—says she is the model
Through whom Cellini will attain such fame
That by comparison men will declare
(*Slowly*) You are a blockhead who does clumsy
work.

BANDINELLO (*exasperated*)

Those are the very words he uses! Heaven
Grant me some means to rid me of Cellini!

RICCIO

May such a prayer find favor! He treats me—
The Major Domo to the Duke of Florence—
As if I were the vilest of his servants!
And sometimes I half think that girl loves him!

BANDINELLO (*giving him several coins*)

More ducats! Waste them not upon a woman!
[*Suggestively.*
Give gold for steel. A good exchange of metals
Sometimes—this time! Or find some other
way—

I care not, so Cellini struts no more.

[*Enter CELLINI, MARSILIO, and DUKE
from Palace, L. 2. E., under stairway.*

DUKE

Riccio, find the Lady Leonora.

[*Pointing to MARSILIO.*

I learn this gentleman knows more about
The special virtues of the precious stones
Than I do. Bid her show him my collection.

[*Exeunt MARSILIO and RICCIO, entering
Palace by stairs on left.*

Well, Bandinello! You have done good work here.

[*Pointing to the statue of Hercules.*

What say you, Benvenuto? You're a critic

CELLINI (*studying the statue*)

What says Florence?

BANDINELLO (*hastily*)

'Tis abuse that praises.

When I uncovered this, my masterpiece,
A hundred sonnets, at the least, were published
Lampooning me. I count that high distinction.

CELLINI (*slowly*)

When Michael Angelo a masterpiece
Displayed in Florence, at the least two hundred,
Each vying with his neighbor to extol
The marvel, gave the tribute due his genius!
In my experience, therefore, I would say
The poets voice the sentiment of Florence!

BANDINELLO (*angrily*)

Does this Cellini, who is but a goldsmith—

CELLINI (*grandly*)

Were you as welcome at the Court of France

As I, you certainly would hear King Francis,
A splendid connoisseur—(*glancing slyly at Duke*)
and what a patron!—

Declare my Jupiter the finest piece
He ever saw. (*Proudly*) Cellini is a sculptor!
And when Andromeda is once completed—

BANDINELLO (*scornfully*)

There will be just one man who calls it famous!
[*The DUKE manifests his enjoyment of the
situation.*

CELLINI (*in a tone of superiority*)

I meant to prove a recreant to Art,
And let this Hercules remain unsentenced.
But now you judge my unshown work so harshly
(*Quietly*) I'll tell the truth about this waste of
marble.

[*Ignoring* BANDINELLO.

Of course 'tis mere quotation. I but echo
The just opinion of the entire city.
(*Pointing to head*) Shave off the hair from it!
Room is not left
To hold the brains. A mirror furnished model!

The face—how badly set upon the neck!
Those sprawling shoulders—like the two great
pommels

[*Turning to BANDINELLO.*

Seen on pack-saddles fitly worn by asses!

BANDINELLO (*hotly*)

My lord Duke Cosimo, the man is jealous!

CELLINI (*scornfully*)

Jealous of what our learned school of Florence
Says had been modeled, at least the breast and
muscles,

From a big sack of melons 'gainst a wall!

Jealous of the worst work of a poor sculptor!

Why, see, as in the work of all pretenders,

And contrary to the simplest rule, it leans

Forward beyond the one-third cubit limit.

There are so many faults in their opinion

I dare not mention all, lest there be one

Which your keen eye, my lord, has overlooked.

Why, Bandinello, see, your Hercules

Has one foot underground, the other hangs

As if it rested on hot coals! This, Art!

BANDINELLO (*hotly*)

You slanderous tongue, ignoring my design!

DUKE (*with evident enjoyment*)

Yes; what of that, my Argus-eyed Cellini?

CELLINI

Did ever a good draughtsman show bad work?

The drawing probably is like the statue.

BANDINELLO (*sputtering*)

You thief! You murderer! You—

CELLINI (*drawing his sword and by dexterous
passes threatening BANDINELLO*)

Go no further!

My lord, pray close your eyes an instant while

My blade determines if there be a heart

Beneath the flesh of such a lifeless *workman*!

DUKE (*laughingly*)

Upon my faith, my good friend Benvenuto,

I better am your patron than your rival!

(*Severely*) But you forget—

CELLINI (*bowing profoundly*)

Your Excellency, pardon!

One fool can make a hundred. This man's follies

Did for a moment blind me to the glory
Of your illustrious presence.

(*To BANDINELLO, grandly*) You may live!

[BANDINELLO *cautiously moves toward right.*

BANDINELLO

My lord, I cannot hope to keep my patience

[*From safe distance.*

Where this stone-cutter brags. Your perfect
health!

[*Exit BANDINELLO, R. 2. F.*

CELLINI (*Running imaginary adversary through
with his sword*)

My lord, but for your mercy, Bandinello
Would cut no more of these abominations!

DUKE (*laughing*)

Be calm, and you shall have that block of marble
I know you long have coveted. And now
Promise to work on nothing but the setting
Of this (*showing a diamond*). What think you?

Is it not superb?

Until you have completed such design
'Twill be the marvel of your craft forever.

CELLINI

Simple enough to do, but it takes time.
I must go on with my Andromeda (*warming up*),
To show to Florence why the King of France
Esteems my statues—

DUKE (*nettled*)

Never mind King Francis;
Florence will pay due tribute to your skill.

CELLINI (*protestingly*)

But Francis paid more gold.

DUKE

Wait! You will see
A Medici is not ungenerous.
Will you postpone Andromeda, and set
This diamond in manner worthy of it?

CELLINI (*examining diamond*)

A splendid stone! Worth twenty thousand ducats,
Or I'm no judge.

DUKE

Yes, and five thousand more!

CELLINI

Had you consulted me ! 'Tis a good stone !
Suppose I lay Andromeda aside—
A thing I hate to do, as you well know—
To set this diamond in haste, would you
Lend splendor to the reign of Cosimo,
Add lustre to Cellini's name, and aid
The cause of Art ?

DUKE (*cautiously*)

What is it you request ?

CELLINI

You know that model at my studio,
The one your Major Domo Riccio
Is ever bothering—that Federiga—
I thought that she would serve for my great
statue ;
In fact, I promised it to her. She cannot !
Her form might do, and must for want of better.
But what an awful arm ! I quite despaired
(*Inspirationaly*) Until I thought of Lady Leo-
nora !

DUKE

She would not pose for you ! The Duchess says
This girl, who distantly is of my kin,
Is modesty personified. And you
And your alarming reputation ! Why,
The very notion of what you desire
Would—

CELLINI (*protestingly*)

Good my lord, how slander doth assail
If one emerge out of the commonplace !
Were time my own instead of pledged to Art
(*Airily*) It would delight me to discuss at length
Some matters with the Lady Leonora.
But as it is, your servant Benvenuto (*bowing
low*)
Must ask permission to declare a bargain.
Let him proceed to set this stone while you
Persuade the lady to permit her arm—
To be immortalized. I'll do the task,
Since she is over-prudish, in the presence
Of your illustrious consort, and agree
Never to make a mention of it. This—

DUKE

Is fair enough. I shall secure consent,
And want your promise now. Remember, silence!

*[Enter MARSILIO and LEONORA, coming
down stairway leading from Palace.
She carries a casket of Jewels.]*

DUKE (*giving him the diamond*)

Take care of it. 'Tis worth full thirty thousand.

CELLINI

Trust me for that! (*Aside*) Its price is thirty
now!

How values range for purchase, sale, or gift!

(*To Duke*) Detain not my apprentice to such hour
His health may suffer. He's so delicate

[For MARSILIO to overhear.]

And such a quiet, unassuming boy,

I would not lose him by some accident.

Your Excellency! Heaven prosper you!

[A sweeping salute. Exit CELLINI, R. 2. E.]

DUKE (*to LEONORA*)

Remind me in the morning Benvenuto
Has a new want, and for once it is not gold !

[*Exit DUKE, L. 2. E., under stairs.* MARSILIO and LEONORA approach bench under a tree, U. C.

LEONORA

Was it from Benvenuto, as the Duke
Calls him, you learned so much of jewels ?

[LEONORA seats herself. She holds the
casket of gems for him to examine.

MARSILIO

No,

Lady Leonora. Since my boyhood
I have seen much of them.

LEONORA

You served skilled goldsmiths ?

MARSILIO (*confused*)

They served— Ah, yes. I long have studied
gems.

I love all things of beauty. I have read,
Strangely enough, the Orestes of your uncle.

LEONORA

More strange that the apprentice of a goldsmith
Knows Dante and Petrarch and Ariosto
All quite as well as do the best of scholars.
(*Carelessly*) Of course you fence and dance, and
write a sonnet?

MARSILIO (*casket of jewels lies open on bench between them*)

Most naturally. (*Confusedly*) That is, I should
say

I much would like to. Here's an amethyst.
What a rare shade!

[*The stone is set in a gold pin.*]

LEONORA (*Taking it*)

What does it symbolize?

MARSILIO

Deep love.

LEONORA (*coquettishly*)

A pretty jewel. Let the Duke beware.
In truth, this tempts me! I may borrow it.

MARSILIO (*with a tinge of sadness*)

'Twould carry its own punishment. And yet—
[*Fastening the pin in her garment.*]

LEONORA

If you were my adviser, you would say—

MARSILIO (*fervently*)

It should be yours.

LEONORA (*laughing*)

'Tis well that you are not ;
Fancy what lessons you would teach !

MARSILIO

Did I

Appear as other than a mere apprentice,
Marsilio Giotto, I might ask
Leave of the gracious Lady Leonora
To give myself the pleasure of presenting
To her this beryl.

[*Drawing a pin from his cloak.*]

LEONORA (*in delighted tone*)

How can I accept ?

[*A slight pause.*]

And were you, then, some other than you seem—

MARSILIO

Might I then hope?

LEONORA

When one has courtly manners
And a true heart—who knows?

MARSILIO

Will you accept it?

LEONORA

What does the beryl bring?

MARSILIO

Great happiness.

LEONORA

What woman offered happiness refuses
Without repentance? Could I but believe
One of such knightly bearing would respect
A sentiment that does me no dishonor,
I would accept this beryl for its meaning,
And in return permit this mere apprentice,
Marsilio Giotto (*stressing name* GIOTTO) to display

His scholarship in reading uncle's poem,
"Italia Liberata." 'Tis unpublished.
Will you peruse the manuscript to-morrow?

MARSILIO

It is an exchange that favors me unduly;
Yet be it on my conscience—I accept.

*[He seems to have some difficulty in putting
the pin through the cloth. She assists
him. Their hands touch.]*

LEONORA (*suddenly*)

But oh, how fast we move in new-formed friend-
ship !

Just think, I never saw you 'til this hour.

MARSILIO

But I saw you—

LEONORA (*indignantly*)

How can you say this thing ?—

MARSILIO (*with deep feeling*)

Ere ever I saw Florence ! Years ago,
When all of life was new to me and fresh,
And the great sun seemed burning but to light
The beauty o' th' world and deeds resplendent,
I seemed to know that sometime in my life,
By Fate, not Chance, I would meet that peerless
one

Who stands, perfect, amid the unrivaled women
Of Italy; and with this knowledge came
A strange awareness of her actual presence.
I loved one yet unseen. Then kind Fortune
Brought me to Florence, placed me with Cellini,
Summoned me here this hour, and I see
That wondrous Presence now at last embodied !
Thus have I seen and see the Lady Leonora !

LEONORA

How skilfully you veil a compliment !
This is a doctrine of affinity
That is so novel I can scarce believe it.

MARSILIO

Yet could you feel some faith in it—

LEONORA

I do. But it is so mysterious!
(*Mockingly*) How could I be that Presence you
say came
To you, sensed but unseen, a thing unearthly,
When I am of an earthly cast and mould ?

MARSILIO (*passionately*)

No! heavenly! I swear!

LEONORA

How you proceed !

You are no Florentine! That much is certain!

Little they know of things supernal here.

[*Pretending annoyance.*

We have a miracle, and you would spoil it

By an anxiety to flatter me.

MARSILIO

With other words I would have challenged
Truth.

LEONORA (*mockingly*)

I! heavenly ! This something that you saw

Long years ago has worked upon your mind,

And you see facts transformed. I heavenly !

This wonder you narrate appeals to me—

The Roucellai always have been students

[*A slight pause.*

I think I have the clue to it.

MARSILIO (*puzzled*)

It is—

LEONORA (*softly*)

'Tis this. I, too, have often thought
I sensed a Presence that would one day come
Where I might be, clothed in the splendid form
Of one of fearless and of gallant bearing—
And too much eloquence—and with some knowl-
edge

(*Yieldingly*) Of how to please a very foolish girl.

[MARSILIO *starts toward her*. LEONORA
steps back.

How late it grows! 'There's much I must think
over.

(*Airily*) This marvelous thing—awareness of a
presence!

[*It is steadily growing darker.*

MARSILIO (*beseechingly*)

It is not late. The shadows prove my claim.

LEONORA (*moving toward stairs and ascending*)

To-morrow, in the afternoon, you may
Tell me more legends of the amethyst,
And help me to interpret obscure lines

In uncle's tragedy. Then you may read
Aloud to me, Marsilio Giotto.

[*Pronouncing name questioningly.*

MARSILIO (*aside*)

My name so strangely spoken !

(*Eagerly to her*) We will read—

LEONORA (*moving slowly up steps and entering
Palace*)

(*Archly*) Awhile.

[*Exit LEONORA. Enter DUKE, I. 2. R.*

DUKE

Young man, you serve the very greatest rascal
This side of France.

MARSILIO (*protestingly*)

Duke Cosimo, Cellini—

DUKE

Is a kind master, you will say. I grant it—
To all except poor fools like me, who fear
Lest he should take his skill from Italy,
And so permit him to mock the Bargello

When that poor mortal tries to keep the peace.
Well! well! These artists! Oftentimes I wonder
Whether the fame we think they win for Florence
Equals their cost to us, the Medici.
But you? He says he loves you as a brother!
Answer! Whence comes this hold on his regard?

MARSILIO

Your Excellency, have I your permission
To ask a question and then answer yours?

DUKE

The love of Heaven! If one knows an artist,
He talks as proudly as the Pope himself.
Yes, you may ask it.

MARSILIO

Grateful for your kindness,
I ask, What feeling have you toward the Prince
(*Slight pause*) Of Perombino?

DUKE (*coldly*)

Why not ask as well

How Cosimo Dé Medici regards
The hundred others with whom he must traffic
To hold his present state in Italy?

MARSILIO

That were beyond all right. If I presume
Upon your graciousness, pardon, my lord.

DUKE (*mockingly*)

Are you the Prince of Perombino?

MARSILIO (*proudly*)

Yes.

DUKE (*severely*)

What! You! Is this one of Cellini's jests?
If so, I think it carries no great humor.
Do not presume too far on my forbearance.

MARSILIO

Duke Cosimo, disguise befits me ill,
Altho' perforce I have adopted it
Against assassins. But, my lord, to you,
Whose rank exceeds my own, I shall be frank.
You know that he who now rules Perombino
Has little right thereto. A D'Appiani
(*Proudly*) Alone holds proper title.

DUKE (*thoughtfully*)

It is true

The Pope has recognized that claim as just.
But he whom you declare usurps has power—
Power, men, and money! Florence gains
Little from him, however. Suppose you had
The aid of Florence to regain your rights,
What might we then expect from Perombino?

MARSILIO (*eagerly*)

That should you ever stand in slightest peril
From your own foes, the strength of Perombino
Is yours at call.

DUKE

Best judgment after sleep!

To-morrow bring the proofs of what you claim,
And you may find me favorably disposed
To lend you forces. We, the Medici,
Can never be too strong to make new friends—
At proper cost. Trust no man here in Florence
Beyond Cellini with your secret, Prince.

MARSILIO (*radiant*)

I shall obey, most noble Duke.

DUKE (*pleasantly*)

You saw

My gem collection. What think you of it?

MARSILIO (*warmly*)

'Tis unsurpassed. And there is one I saw
Too beautiful for words.

DUKE (*looking at him searchingly*)

When you regain

Fair Perombino, to my new ally

Let me present it as close friendship's token.

[MARSILIO *looks radiant.*

Show gratitude hereafter! No! Help now!

Get Benvenuto started on my work!

(*Aside*) That great Andromeda! Must have the arm!

[MARSILIO *starts.*

This calls for skill. My wife must lend me aid.

[The DUKE leaves him and enters Palace.]

CELLINI (*jovially*)

Well, am I not a loyal friend, Marsilio?
Here for an hour have I waited for you,
(*Whimsically*) Lest walking home alone, with
soul inspired

By memories of merry dancing eyes,
Your steps betray your mind's bewilderment,
And then you meet the solemn-faced Bargello,
Who never will accept an explanation
From joyous youths roaming about o' nights.

[MARSILIO *remains sober.*

And you should look like one! Yet you appear
As grave as any owl.

MARSILIO (*nervously*)

I must ask you,
Cellini, have you spoken to the Duke
About Andromeda and of the Lady—

CELLINI (*with a forced laugh*)

The Lady Leonora! Come, my boy,
You do not think my sober forty years
Make me your rival! Have no fear of that!

MARSILIO

But did—

CELLINI

Come home, and talk no more about it.
When I was twenty-three they all seemed angels.

MARSILIO

You have not really answered—

CELLINI

Not a word!

(Reproachfully) Why, boy, you wrong—the lady
—by suspicion!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I. — *Workshop and studio of CELLINI.*

General confusion of seats, screens, draperies. Among the things evidencing the dual use of room are incomplete rough model of Andromeda and a table littered with goldsmith's tools. Door R. R., leading to sleeping apartment; one L. I. E., to street; window, L. 3. E., overlooking street. It is evening, and lamps are lighted.

Discovered: FEDERIGA posing before mirror, R. Enter CELLINI, L. 2. E. He throws himself wearily upon a chair.

CELLINI (*angrily to FEDERIGA*)

Federiga!

FEDERIGA (*anxiously*)

Yes, my lord! What is it?

[*She hurries to his side.*

CELLINI (*angrily*)

I come in tired, thirsty! What, of course?

[*She hands him a cup. He drinks.*

I wonder if I killed him? If I had

A common mind like others, it is certain

I could not keep my patience with such troubles!
Too bad there were no witnesses ! That thrust
I gave him was a marvel ! (*Disgustedly*) No one
saw it !

(*Suddenly pleased*) I'll wager he was hired by
Bandinello !

It maddens him to see how Florence loves me.

FEDERIGA

My lord, will you require me this hour ?

CELLINI (*irritably*)

No, and no other. I am done with you.

Look at the work I did on that Andromeda !

[*Pointing to Andromeda.*

Worthless ! Am I a Bandinello ? No !

It's not my fault. It's yours. Look at your
arm !

I copy that ! Yes, and your figure is bad.

FEDERIGA (*angrily*)

Illustrious signore, 'tis not bad !

CELLINI

What ! You will contradict a man who knows
The true proportions of the human body

Down to the nicest fraction? Federiga,
You go! Just so, I said you go! My art
Demands it. I must have a better model.

FEDERIGA

My lord, I will improve, but let me stay.
I will stay! If you bring another here
In place of me, I'll kill her!

CELLINI

You will do what?

I want no words. I do want a good model.
The love of Heaven! Shall my work proclaim
me

As poor as Bandinello? Me, Cellini!
(*Aside*) Yet what avails my skill without a
model?

FEDERIGA (*aside*)

Some miserable wretch makes love to him!
My lord, do you no longer care for me.

[*She weeps.*]

CELLINI (*aloud to himself*)

A woman's brawling now! Friend Benvenuto,
These women are a nuisance. Always trouble!

Be firm, be just to Benvenuto ! Send
This girl away.

[Giving her money, which she takes.

Take this, and come no more.

FEDERIGA

I will not go !

CELLINI

Well, you do go ! And at once !

*[He opens the door to push her out. She
evades him and goes U. C. MARSILIO
enters equipped for travel.*

MARSILIO

What's wrong with Federiga, Benvenuto ?

CELLINI

Manners, figure—everything ! That arm !

I'm out of humor anyway ! What's happened ?

MARSILIO (*joyfully*)

Enough to make you joyous for my sake.

Think ! I have really won her, Benvenuto—

Won her, altho' she thinks me your apprentice !

CELLINI (*pleased*)

Perhaps association with Cellini
Did you no harm; but still I think the credit
Belongs to you. She's a Rucellai.
No better family in Florence. Boy,
You do me honor! I am proud of you!

MARSILIO (*joyfully*)

The smile of Fortune lights all things about me!
The Duke of Florence lends me his support—
I come to say farewell. I leave this night
For Perombino. In another month
I shall return to ask you to my Court.

CELLINI (*unconsciously striking FEDERIGA, who
has approached, penitently, with his sword*)

Good! Good! I love you, my Marsilio!
(*To FEDERIGA*) What, you still here! Take
this (*giving her money*) and go, I say!

[*He snatches up the cup.*

Prosperity to Perombino's Lord—

[*FEDERIGA goes out one door, and, returning
by another, reappears in rear of studio.*

—And to the gracious Lady Leonora!

MARSILIO (*significantly*)

You then remain my true and loyal friend?

CELLINI (*laughing*)

I promise you the lady will not come
To this my workshop—no, my studio!

MARSILIO (*from door*)

We start before the break of day. Farewell!
Good luck with your Andromeda!

CELLINI (*warmly, as MARSILIO goes*)

Success!

[*Exit MARSILIO.*]

CELLINI (*thoughtfully, earnestly, as he turns
from the door*)

I wish I were the father of Marsilio!
He would have been an artist! Not like me,
A mere pretender, boasting of the future
That soon will be the past, with nothing done
To rank my name with Michael Angelo's!
I would have taught him all that I have learned!
The flame that dimly shines in me, in him,
Fed by a purer and a loftier spirit,

Might have created some immortal thing !
I could have done it had I kept my vision
Above the gross and earthly beautiful !
There is a passion that exalts the soul,
And there are passions, too, that quench its
light—

You are of earth, Cellini ! Why aspire ?
Laugh with the wanton, turn your skill to gold,
Spend it with friends and mock your enemies—
And Florence cries : “ Cellini, drink with us ! ”—
While Michael Angelo sculpts for the future !
Oh, for the faith, the trust, th’ impassioned
thought

Of that young boy ! And who am I that craves it ?
The foul-fed client of a sorry patron,
Sporting the colors of despised indulgence,
While Angelo seeks God beyond the skies !
O Heaven! something in me says I too
May yet do work worth doing, not these trifles !
(*Inspirationaly*) Too late ! Too late ! No ! It
is not too late !

Back there in France, is not my Jupiter
At Fontainebleau ? Do I not see in air

This very instant that Andromeda
Whose beauty fired the soul of Perseus?
It is not meant that I must die a goldsmith!
Andromeda! There is your work, Cellini!
Let nothing stand between! And nothing shall!

[*He starts up vigorously. FEDERIGA
watches closely as he grasps a tool, only
to throw it down in disgust.*

A miserable piece of work! I must
Have better model. Did I give a promise?
I'll keep it to its letter, but no more.
Marsilio would never know the difference.
In any case, I do not ask her here.
There at the palace is the arm I need—
Yes, and the form divine! I'll go at once!

[*CELLINI rushes out.*

FEDERIGA

An arm, a form divine! Whom has he found?
I thought there was another! Who is she?
"There at the Palace!" Riccio will know—
That fool!

[*Enter RICCIO, L. 2. E.*

RICCIO

Ah, lovely Federiga ! What
Has happened ? See, your cheeks are like two
roses,
Your eyes like sparkling gems. Your brow—

FEDERIGA (*tartly*)

You are all words !

RICCIO

You wrong me, Federiga !
Reward me with a kiss. Is this not beautiful ?
[*Showing her a bracelet.*

FEDERIGA

A kiss for that ! Twice dear at twenty soldi !
All gilt—an imitation. Fool me ! Humph !

RICCIO

You scorn my gift ? Well, there are other girls
In Florence for Francesco Riccio
To kiss without the giving of a present.
Some day this braggadocio, Cellini,
Will change his humor and show you the door.

FEDERIGA

As I show it to you. No ; what's the use ?

You're a tiresome fool. 'Tis not your fault.
Nature made you one. You may give it to me.
[*Takes the bracelet.*]
The kiss ! Some day, perhaps. Not now. Be-
ware!
Cellini says you are a noisy idiot.
He may return and thrash you.

RICCIO.

Devil take him!
Aye! he will take him, and that very soon.

FEDERIGA

What do you mean?

RICCIO

First answer, do you love him?

FEDERIGA

Love him! No, the villain! Even now
He talks of a new model at the Palace!
Fool tho' you be, you're right. He's thro' with
me.

RICCIO

A model at the Palace? Can it be
This rascal thinks of Lady Leonora?

FEDERIGA

Of whom? He surely does not think of her!

RICCIO

Whom else? There is no other there who can
Compare with you, my angel Federiga!

FEDERIGA

You have more sense, Francesco, than I thought.
Suppose I go with you. What kind of treat-
ment
Shall I receive?

RICCIO

I'll beg and steal for you!

[Some one is heard approaching.]

FEDERIGA

His step! Go quickly! He's coming! Go!

*[Rushing to window, L. 3. Exit RICCIO,
hurriedly, L. 2. E.]*

They do not meet. Good luck for Riccio!

[Enter CELLINI, L. 2. E.]

CELLINI (*excitedly*)

I must be crazy, hurrying at this hour
To pester Cosimo. I need a rest.

(*To Federiga*) What are you doing here? I bade you go.

FEDERIGA

You did not mean that I should stay away?

CELLINI

Make no mistake in that. I'm done with you.

FEDERIGA

You're done with me! Do you mean done for good

With me! You said that you would make me famous!

CELLINI

Is it my fault? How can I make you great?

Impossible! Go you to Bandinello.

You're fit to be his model. Say Cellini

Presents you, with his compliments.

FEDERIGA

Cellini!

Do not forget that Federiga, who

Has a poor arm—bad figure!—has a heart!

And hearts can hate, sometimes, where they have loved.

CELLINI

Well, don't go hungry. Eat before you go.
As for myself, I need an hour of sleep.
Let no one trouble me. Go when you're
through!

[CELLINI enters rear room.

FEDERIGA

So I may eat before I go! And this
Is all the pay that Federiga gets
For being slave and model to Cellini!
Am I a dog, that he should bid me go?
And where? To Bandinello! To his rival!
[An idea strikes her.

To Riccio! When I have loved Cellini!
[Shaking fist at rear room.

The devil with all men! I hate you! hate
you!

If I could kill you! Marry Riccio
When I have been his model! Federiga,
Don't be a fool! That Riccio has money.

[She perceives a ring on the table and
grasps it.

And so has Federiga! 'Tis the stone

The Duke means for the Pope! How beautiful!
I wonder what it's worth. I'll go away,
Far off, where no one knows, and there I'll
sell it!

What will they do to him? You would beat me!
Tell me you're done with me, and take
The lady at the Palace in my stead!

[Enter MARSILIO, L. 2. E. *She hides ring
in her dress and looks confused.*

MARSILIO

Where's Benvenuto?

FEDERIGA (*nervously*)

You must not disturb him;
He is asleep, and must not be awakened
By any one, he said.

MARSILIO (*producing a letter from his cloak*)

It is as well.

When he awakes, tell him that I desire
This note be given Lady Leonora,
And that for this new favor once again
I stand the debtor to his loyal friendship.

Oh, yes. And add that I may be away
Some fifty days, altho' it may be less.

FEDERIGA

The Lady Leonora! Oh, tell me,
Messer Marsilio, is she the one
Who takes my place?

MARSILIO

Who takes your place! What mean you?

FEDERIGA

He told me I must go. He says that I
Shall pose no more for his Andromeda.
He thinks out loud, and I just heard him say
A Palace lady has the arm and figure
He needs, and you would never know about it.

MARSILIO

Is't possible? Can he plan in my absence
To win consent? By Heaven! he answers me
Before I go—

FEDERIGA (*frightened*)

He must not be awakened,
Messer Marsilio! Believe me not.
I spoke in spite because he bade me go.

MARSILIO

Yet how know you—

[*Enter a soldier, L. 2. E.*

SOLDIER

Messer Marsilio,

Five hundred men, by order of the Duke,
Wait your commands. His Excellency said
We would start out ere Florence wakes and notes
The fact of our departure.

MARSILIO

I must go !

[*To FEDERIGA, handing her a letter.*

Give it to him, and say Marsilio,
His friend, trusts all to friendship !

(*To SOLDIER*) Come ![*Exit MARSILIO and SOLDIER, L. 2. E.*FEDERIGA (*shaking her fist at rear room*)

He loves her ! You are back at your old tricks.
Before me there were others, after me—
You go to prison ! Done with Federiga !

[*Takes ring from her bosom.*

And I have here perhaps five thousand ducats !
What noise is that ? I must see Riccio,

And find a place to hide myself from him

[Looks out of the window.

Until I can leave Florence. The Bargello !

Come for Cellini ! Ah, this gives me time !

*[She rushes out of the room. A great noise
and confusion at outer door. CELLINI
enters workshop from rear room, sword
in hand.*

CELLINI (*angrily*)

What in the devil's name ! Here ! Federiga !

Didn't I say—where is that girl ? Oh, yes,

She's gone ! And now I need her ! Benvenuto,

You were a fool to lose that girl ! Well, who

Are you that thunders ! Come in. You've been
drinking !

[Opens door. BARGELLO and retinue enter,

L. 2. E.

Ha, the Bargello !

BARGELLO

You must come, Cellini.

Make no resistance. I have twenty here.

CELLINI (*apparently pleased*)

Twenty ! He deems that many requisite
To take Cellini ! Well, no doubt it would.

[*Saluting profoundly.*

Messer Vittorio, you do me honor !

BARGELLO (*severely*)

And Florence equal service.

CELLINI (*in mock humility*)

Who am I

That you should come to call with such an escort,
And at a time when, most unfortunately,

(*Severely*) I am too busy to give you attention !

[*Approaching table and picking up a file.*

BARGELLO

An end to jesting ! You must come with us.

Complaint is lodged that you have nearly killed—

CELLINI

A rascal, who apparently intended

To take my life ! 'Twas dark. The road was
narrow.

I bade him move aside. His weapon flashed;

Mine was the quicker—down he went. I ran—
'Tis seldom one of these Sicilian scoundrels
Attacks without a dozen rogues at hand.

BARGELLO

It was reported different. However,
The truth comes out in court, hereafter. This
Is not the place.

CELLINI (*authoritatively*)

But there will be no other—
At any rate at present. Can't you see
I am engaged on work of great importance?

BARGELLO

It matters not. Our business is more urgent.

CELLINI (*mockingly*)

To bother honest men is more important
Than to complete a present for the Pope !

[*All bow reverently.*]

I cannot trouble with such stupid men !
Begone ! Messer Vittorio, I gave you
Credit for better sense ! I was mistaken.

BARGELLO (*manifestly impressed*)

And have you really been engaged upon
Work for His Holiness?

CELLINI

Have I not said so?

Here is the proof—a ring. Where did I place it?
I had it here—yes, here. And—then I went—

[*Startled, excited.*

To sleep! Where is it? Who could have been
here?

Bargello! Scour this place! I have been
robbed!—

A stone worth fifty thousand ducats gone!

BARGELLO (*skeptically*)

This time a thief! The man you tried to murder
Was an assassin!

CELLINI

Fool! You're wasting time.

Pursue the thief! I shall! Stand back, I say!

BARGELLO

Think you I am so simple? Close around him!
He lies about the stone. Do not resist!

I represent the Law you have offended
A hundred times—too often just by once.

CELLINI (*snatches up his sword*)

In God's name, man, quit talking! If that ring
Is not recovered, then Duke Cosimo
Will have you flogged. My honor is at stake!

[*Forces way through crowd and gains door.*

You know this blade! He dies who bars Cellini!

[*Rushes out, L. 2. E.*

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—*A room in the Palace of the DUKE.
Folding-door at rear. Couch on right, near
center.*

*Discovered : The DUKE resting on the couch, while
RICCIO busies himself in attendance upon him.
As curtain rises a tumult is heard without
(rear), and then CELLINI'S voice rings out
clearly.*

CELLINI (*from without*)

Justice, my Lord !

DUKE

Cellini wants more money !

The man's a nuisance !

RICCIO

Far worse than the plague !

You are not well, illustrious signore.

Permit me to remind you, your physician

Insists upon your perfect rest.

DUKE

Just so.

[CELLINI rushes in, followed by BARGELLO
and others from rear, E.]

What means this noisy entry, Benvenuto ?

CELLINI

Justice ! I call for justice ! Noble Duke,
This fool of a Bargello interferes
With my free movements !

DUKE (*irritably*)

Doubtless for good cause!
There must be peace in Florence, and you
brawlers
Must be restrained.

CELLINI (*in aggrieved tone*)

My lord, what have I done
To forfeit your regard ?

DUKE (*petulantly*)

Here in my Palace,
Where princes tread respectfully, you dare,
Insolent braggart that you are, to shout
And bear yourself as if you did not know
Your master's residence and of his illness.

CELLINI (*deferentially*)

Your Excellency is not well ? My deep,
Sincere regret ! If I might recommend
A remedy, my lord, 'tis that you banish

This Riccio, whose face is irritation
Enough to Health to bring us back the Plague.

DUKE

Silence! Bargello, what does all this mean?

BARGELLO

Duke Cosimo, this scamp, who is perpetual
Menace to peace, has stabbed a man, a stranger,
Whose friends, particularly Bandinello,
Insist that he be punished. For this reason
Cellini was arrested. But as he
Declares there is a matter of importance
He must reveal to you, I've brought him hither,
For I did think that there might be, perhaps,
Some truth in his assertion, noble Duke.

DUKE (*regarding Cellini unpleasantly*)

Which means that you want what?

CELLINI (*artfully*)

Justice, my lord!

The man, who now appears so closely bound
To Bandinello that he stands his sponsor,
At dusk, and from behind, and with no warning,
Tho' not legitimately foe of mine,

Being a man I never saw before,
Marked Bandinello's hate upon my skin.
I turned, and as a warning to assassins
(*Insidiously*) I gave that thrust I promised to
teach you.

Is it a crime to strike in self-defense?
And should not the Bargello be reproved
For troubling both of us?

DUKE

You argue well—

Provided that the facts are as you say.
(*To Bargello*) Do you investigate. The mean-
time we
Would have you put your mind, good Benvenuto,
Upon the ring.

CELLINI (*looking down, but watching the DUKE
from the corner of his eye*)

'Tis there, my lord, I suffered
The most from his stupidity. Exhausted
By my long hours of most patient labor,
Sleep claimed me for a moment. I awoke
To hear these fellows storming at my door.

The ring was gone! I bade them seek the thief.
They scoffed! Alone, without a clew, I hurried
Into the street—

DUKE (*anxiously*)

And you recovered it?
You did not lose that stone worth forty thousand
Ducats!

CELLINI (*contritely*)

With fifty men they captured me
Ere I could trace and wrest it from the thief!

DUKE

Mean you to say, Cellini, it is lost?

RICCIO

The man himself may easily have hidden it!

CELLINI (*angrily*)

You villain! Do you dare besmirch Cellini!
Draw and defend—

[*Drawing his sword.*]

DUKE

Seize him, Bargello!
Your insults to our person go beyond
The limit of our patience. We require

Two things of you, Cellini, and at once :
Apology to Riccio—the ring !

CELLINI (*with quiet dignity*)

Behind you, my lord Duke, there stands the
strength

Of Florence to enforce your will. Behind

Cellini is his innocence—and justice!

The man (*hotly*) who dares asperse my honor is

A villain, tho' (*deferentially*) in my desire to
please

My well-loved lord, I might withdraw the word.

(*Sadly*) As for the ring, 'tis gone, I know not
where,

And with it gone the honor of Cellini,

To whom it was entrusted, unless he

Recover it—(*with conviction*) which he will surely
do !

RICCIO

Bold words ! But sound they not like subter-
fuge?

My lord, he has the ring !

DUKE

Cellini, you

Fool that I was to come here. (*Boldly*) Give me
pen!

A line to Francis how they treat Cellini !
Word to the Pope that one whom he has honored
Is called a thief by Cosimo of Florence !

DUKE (*manifestly impressed*)

Friend Benvenuto, how that pride of yours
Blinds you to consequences! Well, you artists
Cannot be judged as others. You have nearly
Killed a friend, 'tis said, of Bandinello's.
This must be punished, or no law in Florence !
As for the ring, Bargello, take his orders,
Search where he bids you. In the meanwhile
you

Remain our prisoner. Leave us alone.

[*Exeunt all but DUKE and CELLINI, rear.*

Send for what tools you need. Here at the
Palace

A room will be provided for your work.

CELLINI

My lord, I really thought you were in earnest.
But for the ring, my joy would be complete.

Heaven, which always favors Benvenuto,
Will surely cause the capture of the thief—
(*Joyfully*) While I shall work upon Andromeda!

DUKE (*coldly*)

What's that?

CELLINI (*anxiously*)

Has not the lady given her consent?

DUKE.

Oh, you mean Leonora! You forget
The stone must first be set. The ring is lost,
You say—

CELLINI

I say! My lord, you do not doubt it?

DUKE

Let that be as it may. Just now the Duchess
Gives me no peace. She would have you engaged
Upon a bracelet that she wants. If you
Are wise, you will work zealously upon it.

CELLINI (*greatly disappointed*)

I may not see the Lady Leonora?

DUKE

Talk of no statues till the ring is found.

Give me your word you will not leave the Palace,
And you may stay here rather than in prison.

CELLINI

I give my promise.

[*The DUKE regards CELLINI questioningly.*

The latter meets the look boldly.

DUKE

Then await you here

The Duchess, and obey her in all things !

[*Exit DUKE. CELLINI'S expression changes
to one of contempt.*

CELLINI

A politician, and they call him statesman!

And I must bow and cringe and say "my lord,"

And know he thinks me guilty in his heart.

Where is that ring? I had it ere I slept.

Who could have taken it? Not Federiga!

I've tempted her a thousand times! She loves
me!

Bandinello? No; 'tis hate that hints it.

How could he have been there, or any hireling?

Marsilio! He left before I slept!
Then how found I the letter for the Lady?
He came back! Who is this Marsilio?
The Prince of Perombino? How do I
Know that he spoke the truth in this? He came
To me a total stranger. I believed
And asked no proof. I trusted voice and eye.
Has he deceived me? Did he take the ring?
He must be followed! No! I love that boy!
If he spoke truth, and goes to Perombino,
'Twould mean his ruin! Did he take the ring?

[*Enter DUCHESS and LADY LEONORA, rear.*]

DUCHESS

At last, my lord declares, you have some time
To place at my behest, Messer Cellini.

LEONORA (*jestingly*)

And may I hope some moments are reserved
For me as well, your Highness?

CELLINI (*to Leonora*)

My one hope
Is to contribute in your name to Art.

DUCHESS

If you would hold my favor, make for me
Some trifles I have wanted long. A ring
To wear upon the little finger. Also
A pendant, something novel, for a ruby—
Oh, yes, and then I want a brooch designed
Quite different from all others. And a vase!
Use little gold and much of skill, Cellini,
To make it look pretentious. 'Tis a present
For one of my best friends! When this is done—

CELLINI (*in mock politeness*)

Signora, I would stand upon my head
Three hours or more the while my eloquence
Were full employed to pay the tribute due
Your worth, if it would give you any pleasure ;
(*Warming up*) But to devote the time required to
do

This goldsmithing—the work of artisan—
When all my soul is stirred to make a statue
Worthy of genius such as Heaven has granted
Cellini, is a punishment, my Lady.
Why, there at Fontainebleu, King Francis said:
“ Behold, how I have brought from Italy

The greatest man who ever lived, endowed
With all the talents." Truly so spoke Francis!

DUCHESS

And these fine words, Cellini, mean, do they,
You will not do my bidding?

CELLINI

Good Signora,

I do but plead for time to work upon
Andromeda. 'Twas promised that this lady
Would aid—had not the ring been stolen from me!

[Leonora looks surprised.]

DUCHESS

Methinks you choose a poor time to offend
Those high in power!

CELLINI (*deferentially*)

My gracious lady, I
Live but to please you! Let me send for one
Who works about my shop—

DUCHESS

Ah! Then you promise
My ring, my brooch, my pendant, and my vase,
And—I forgot before—I want a seal

Bearing the arms of Medici, of course.
Now these and all of them you promise me
Within four days—or will you make it three?

CELLINI (*exasperated*)

“Within four days—or will I make it three!”
Your Grace may have them in a single hour—
Provided Ochus Bochus shows me how.
Pray have him hastily recalled to life,
That he may teach me magic.

DUCHESS

You refuse me!

LEONORA

Dear friend, Cellini does not mean offense.
You know he is an artist. I am sure
If you will leave us here alone, I can
Secure his word to execute your order.

DUCHESS (*petulantly*)

I never have success with him. You try!
Were I the Duke I'd have him flogged! (*Be-
seechingly*) Persuade him!

[*Exit* DUCHESS, *rear*.]

LEONORA (*archly*)

Messer Cellini, I am well disposed
Toward you !

CELLINI (*seriously*)

Heaven, I thank thee for my talents!

LEONORA

Why are you here and treated as a prisoner ?

CELLINI

I wounded an assassin ! Great offense !
The real cause ! A stone entrusted to me
Is lost—stolen by some one while I slept.
The Duke holds me responsible. Cellini,
(*Bitterly*) Regarded with suspicion !

LEONORA (*warmly*)

I am certain

That you are innocent. Marsilio
Told me Cellini risks his life for honor.

CELLINI

He said that ! Ha ! a splendid boy ! I felt it !

LEONORA

He bears himself so proudly, your apprentice !
Tell me where does he come from ? Who is he ?

CELLINI

That, lady, is a secret I must keep.

LEONORA

A secret ! How mysterious ! Is he
Of such importance, then ?

CELLINI

You wish him well ?

LEONORA

Why not ? Should not one wish the best for all ?

CELLINI (*as if soliloquizing*)

And yet he came back while I was asleep !
Or how did this arrive ?

[*Handling the letter left by* MARSILIO.]

LEONORA

More mystery ?

CELLINI (*soliloquizes to be overheard*)

A stranger, no credentials, that boy came
To Florence, met me, and I trusted him.

LEONORA (*warmly*)

He has the power to inspire—friendship !

CELLINI

That truly ! Heaven grant it was not he
Who took the ring.

LEONORA (*startled*)

Do you suspect Marsilio ?

CELLINI

What shall I answer ? Could my eyes be blinded
To facts that have but one significance,
My love would do it. Yet try as it may,
They stand in bold relief before me. Lady,
Against their cursed import I must raise
One sole weak barrier—what I know of him,
And that on his own words alone.

LEONORA

And I

Know only that his soul is in his face—
That soul a pure and high one ! That his honor
Suffers no stain ! A woman's intuition
Scorns facts and circumstances, leaps to truth—
And by it I affirm his innocence !

CELLINI

He has affirmed himself of princely rank.

LEONORA

I guessed aright! Then it is true, he is!
And being so he stands beyond temptation.
Your doubt requires evidence. 'Tis here!

CELLINI

A woman's reasoning! But I, my lady,
Have looked on faces that deceive before.
Believe me, there are mirrors that reflect
Only the noblest, customary thoughts,
Yet from the depths may suddenly arise,
Conjured by swift temptation, impulses
That cast no shadow while they slept beneath.

LEONORA

Suspicion ever seeks to justify
Its wrong by reference to experience!

CELLINI

Would that I had your faith! Yet should I fail
To follow now the only clew I have—
For every indication points to him—
The time allowed to me will quickly pass
With no advantage gained. And then Cellini

Must face—who knows what peril? While his
name,
Honored 'til now, stands branded with vile theft.

LEONORA

Cellini, he is innocent! Believe me!
You must not point suspicion toward Marsilio.

CELLINI

Whom else, if not Marsilio? I have
No other clew. My freedom is at stake—
Nay, more, my honor. I must find the ring!

LEONORA

What is it worth? My purse is at your service.

CELLINI (*aside*)

She loves him well—that boy!

(*To Leonora*) Your offer, lady,
Is generous indeed, but I cannot
Propose to pay for it and in effect
Confess to guilt. I need the ring, not money.

LEONORA (*anxiously*)

What reasons gave Marsilio for departure?

CELLINI

Political. This must not be divulged!
If he spoke truth, disclosure now means ruin.

LEONORA (*beseechingly*)

Then you will say no more of him at present?

CELLINI (*slowly*)

My Lady Leonora, if I should,
In deference to your wishes, hold my peace,
Nor call attention to Marsilio,
And risk all on your intuition, will
You give Cellini opportunity
To gain a fame hereafter that will balance
Present dishonor of his name in Florence?

LEONORA

How can I do it?

CELLINI

In the admiration

Men feel for genius they forget the man.
Heaven means that I should sculpt Andromeda!
I need a model!

LEONORA

Cellini, do not speak!

CELLINI (*pleadingly*)

Only your arm, my lady. Only that!
Show me the arm. The rest leave to my skill!

LEONORA

And this will save Marsilio?

CELLINI

I promise—

Whether he has the ring or not!—I promise!

LEONORA

What shall I tell the Duchess?

CELLINI

Say to her

The work that she wants done will be completed.
The service you do Art commands my zeal!
The bulk of it, in any case, my workman
Can do 'neath my directions. Tell not that!
Lady, remember that we have exchanged
Our promises!

[*Leonora gives him her hand. His eye follows the lines of the arm.*]

LEONORA

And I am still your debtor!
Trust me, Messer Cellini, our good Duke

Will find the one who really stole the ring.

[*Exit LEONORA. Enter DA TROTTI and TORELLO. They salute LEONORA as she passes them.*]

DA TROTTI

A devilish fix, good Benvenuto! How
Can I assist? My means are at your service.

TORELLO

And mine, no less! There is no man in Florence
I'd sooner swear by!

CELLINI

Friends, my heart is full!

DA TROTTI

Keep up good courage, Benvenuto! Surely
A day or two will bring the truth to light.

CELLINI

I think it will. Well, friends, 'tis not the first
Imprisonment I've known. This present cell
Is comfortable. You will bring the news
And hush reports, Da Trotti, by our friendship!
Yes, as you say, a day or two will bring
The truth to light! Be rid of care for me.

You'll leave me now—I have to think, you see—
Of how to trace the thief. No! No! *I'll* do it!

TORELLO

Why, let us help you! Tell us what you think.
We'll trace the fellow. Will we not, Da Trotti?

DA TROTTI

Ah, that we will! We old ones have ideas.

CELLINI

I beg of you, my friends, let me plan all—
(*Humorously*) In concert with my good friend
the Bargello—

TORELLO

But we can do a little work in secret?

CELLINI (*earnestly*)

Torello, as you love me, make no move!
Let no good friend of mine concern himself
In this! It is my matter. I know how
Cellini wants the search conducted! Nay,
Be not offended! I am grateful, truly!
But you know me of old—must have my way!

(*Shouting*) Ho, guards ! Bring wine—the best
you have—in haste !

[*Wine is hastily brought from the rear room.*

Friends, we will drink—

DA TROTTI

Your prompt release !

TORRELO

Your health !

CELLINI (*excitedly*)

No ! Would you honor me ? Then drink to
Fame.

(*Sadly*) Fame for Cellini, cost it what it may !

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*A room in the Palace used as a workshop by CELLINI. Furnishing shows much regard for comfort as well as elegance. A screen hides couch, etc., in left corner.*

Discovered: CELLINI enters, and stands before a small wax statue of Andromeda, covered with cloths.

CELLINI (*pleased*)

Delightful while it lasts! My twenty days
Up full two weeks ago. It is a marvel
How Heaven can forgive my many sins
And keep such watch on my behalf! 'Tis finished!

Only in wax—mere model, but I have it!
(*Enthusiastically*) When Cosimo is well enough
to talk

I'll beg that piece of marble Bandinello

[*Enter DA TROTTI, U. R. E.*

Thinks his already—Welcome, good Da Trotti!

DA TROTTI

My Benvenuto, is there in all Florence
A man with luck like yours? Four weeks ago
I trembled for your head. To-day I find—

CELLINI

Cellini, wondering if another hour
Will see all changed! The Duke's astrologer
Tells me his lordship has at last recovered
From his long illness—and talks of that ring!
(*In worried tones*) And none too kindly of my
humble self.

DA TROTTI

The very devil! So that is the secret?
Cosimo ill abed—Cellini lords it!
The Duke recovered—quite a different story!

CELLINI

I count no little now upon the favor
Of that fool Duchess, who, for all her boasting
Of love of Art, can never tell the difference—
A lucky thing for me!—between the work
I do myself and that of my best workman.

DA TROTTI (*laughing*)

He does the work and you devote your time—

CELLINI (*proudly*)

To Art! Not trinkets for a silly woman.

Behold my model for the masterpiece

Which makes you famous—as Cellini's friend!

[DA TROTTI *looks at the wax model, partially removing cloths.*

DA TROTTI

Magnificent! What symmetry! Wherever

Did you find woman with a form so perfect?

I swear to you in all of my experience

I never have beheld the like! Who is it?

[*Servant enters* U. R. E.

SERVANT (*announcing*)

The Prince of Perombino!

[*Enter MARSILIO*, U. R. E.

CELLINI

'Tis Marsilio!

He comes back! Then he must be innocent!

MARSILIO (*cordially*)

How comes it, Benvenuto, you have moved
Your workshop to the Palace? On the streets
I hear all sorts of rumors of Cellini—
Some say a guest, some say a prisoner,
And yet no one to tell the cause. I greet you,
In any case, my truest and best friend.

CELLINI (*surveying him in mock admiration*)

So you are Lord of Perombino now!
Splendid, Marsilio! I will visit you
Some day when I am needed less in Florence.

DA TROTTI

You are the youth who told us of the lady
Upon the house-top! 'Twas a pretty tale,
And graciously you told it. You were then
My friend's apprentice, now a prince! Indeed,
This must be politics! Let me depart
And tender my respects to our good Duchess.
Prince of Perombino, congratulations!

[*Exit* DA TROTTI, U. R. E.]

CELLINI (*in dispirited tones*)

Marsilio, I can deceive such fools
As old Da Trotti, and make them believe

My heart the merriest in Florence. You, lad,
Are far too dear to me for that. To you
I say, Art fails ! My spirit's broken !

MARSILIO

Dear Benvenuto, all is mystery !

CELLINI

The night you left, that diamond the Duke
Placed in my hands to set, a stone that's worth
Some twenty thousand ducats, disappeared.
He dares suspect my honor !

MARSILIO

Yours, Cellini !

This is incredible !

CELLINI

But none less true !

I cannot even guess who might have taken it.
My time for search is up. Well, I have done
Something at least to count against the loss
Of my good name ! There, boy, I have in wax
What will, in marble, stand a monument
To me when both of us are dust. Behold !

Andromeda !—great Heaven, I forgot !

[MARSILIO *draws the wrappings aside.*
He throws them over the right hand
of statue.

MARSILIO

I cannot be mistaken ! It is she !
That perfect form imprinted on my mind
There in the sunlight ! And that faultless arm !

CELLINI

Well, do you think Cellini is a sculptor ?

MARSILIO (*fiercely*)

I think him a false friend, a lying villain !

CELLINI (*angrily*)

Art mad, boy, that you hold your life so lightly ?
Withdraw those words ! Not even you may say
them !

I tell you, boy (*pleadingly*), Marsilio, withdraw
them.

MARSILIO (*still more angrily*)

I tell you draw your sword, for I repeat them !

Traitor ! I trusted you ! There is the proof
Of your vile perfidy !

[Pointing to Andromeda.]

CELLINI

I might explain.

But is my honor at so low an ebb
That I must thus reply to insult ? Why
(*Aloud to himself*) It would be death for him to
fight with me !

I love you, boy ! I will explain.

MARSILIO

Think not

To gloss with words your treason to our friend-
ship !

I should have known how you regard all women !

CELLINI

I swear, boy, she is true to you ! See, I,
Cellini, who have never trusted woman,
Will testify for Lady Leonora !

MARSILIO

There is the evidence ! I want no more !
She whom I would have sworn the loftiest

In all the world, the model of Cellini!
You can explain! There is no explanation!
To-morrow I return to Perombino,
No more the trusting boy, for I have learned
How false a friend can be—how vile a woman!

CELLINI (*restraining his anger*)

When you have learned the truth, Marsilio,
You will ask pardon—aye, from both of us!

MARSILIO

The truth! Where can the truth be found?
Five weeks ago she gave her troth to me.
Softer than this poor wax I look upon
Must be the modesty that melts before
The flattery and cozening words of one
Who dares not face the penalty of wrong!

[*Drawing his sword.*]

CELLINI (*aloud to himself*)

Restrain yourself! Remember, Benvenuto,
The boy is young and cannot guess the facts!
(*To MARSILIO*) Marsilio, I will not fight with
you!

MARSILIO (*approaches, about to strike him*)

Coward! Will you respond to this!

[*Enter DUCHESS and LEONORA, R. U. R. E.*

CELLINI

The ladies!

[*LEONORA, radiant, looks at MARSILIO, who avoids her eye in his formal salutation.*

DUCHESS

Benvenuto, I have come to warn you;

My lord is out of bed and in a rage.

It would fare badly with you should he come

And not find you engaged on work for me.

Start something new—a bracelet with four Cupids

Shooting their arrows at a hundred Gods!

CELLINI (*in half-veiled sarcasm*)

My lady, future ages would requite you

For your devotion to the cause of Art—

Should I work out such marvelous design!

(*Pleasantly*) Permit me to commend to your
kind favor

The Duke's good friend, the Prince of Perom-
bino.

LEONORA

Of Perombino!

DUCHESS

Welcome to our Court,

My Lord of Perombino! Leonora,

Do you extend our hospitality

To our new guest the while I find a means

To gain reprieve for this enchanting artist.

Friend Benvenuto, will you sketch the bracelet?

*[Exit DUCHESS and CELLINI, supplicating
aid from Heaven as she carries him off.]*

LEONORA (*joyfully*)

Marsilio! I knew you were not guilty!

MARSILIO (*starting back*)

Not guilty! I! What jest is this? I find

The man I trusted perfidy itself,

The woman I have worshiped but poor clay,

And then am told I am not guilty. Oh!

(*Bitterly*) Indeed I am. Guilty of a blind faith!

Guilty of trusting in a woman! Guilty—

LEONORA (*anxiously*)

Surely you are not well, Marsilio!

I must forgive you. You have traveled far
And in great haste.

MARSILIO (*bitterly*)

Aye, thinking to greet you
With news of my new circumstances. What
Was Perombino to an hour with her
Who seemed the brightest star of all that lighted
The road to Florence! I come, and then I see
How she beguiles the hours of my absence!

[*Pointing to Andromeda.*]

LEONORA (*laughing*)

Is that the cause of this tirade? I thought
Your senses had departed! You are jealous!
A little jealousy is love's best proof!
Again I do forgive you. If you knew
The way Cellini won permission, you
Would speak so differently!

MARSILIO

How can you treat

So lightly such dishonor? Do not shrink
And gaze at me protestingly, as if
I did you some great wrong! Cellini's model!

All Florence—aye, and all of Italy—
(*In bitter scorn*) So to regard the Lady Leonora,
Who was the promised bride of Perombino!

LEONORA (*indignantly*)

And this is love! You came to us a stranger;
I asked no proofs of what you were, beyond
The light I thought I saw upon your face!
You said: "Trust me, my lady," and I trusted.
Love says: "Trust one you love." How am I
trusted?

Condemned unheard—upon what evidence!

MARSILIO (*pointing to statue*)

Who would need more than that? I am not
blind!

LEONORA (*scornfully*)

Am I unworthy, then, because Cellini
Has modeled my poor arm? And under what
Conditions! You believe 'twas vanity,
I doubt not now, which prompted me. Leave me!
I never wish to see your face again!
The insult you have offered I forgive,
But one does not forget!

MARSILIO (*softening*)

If it had been

Only the arm! I know he is persistent,
And thinks his fame rests on it! But that statue!
'Tis more than just the arm!

LEONORA (*greatly surprised*)

And I, you think,

Posed for Andromeda? Why, now I see
The reason for your madness. How could you
Think such a thought of one you claimed to love!

MARSILIO

I would you had more just cause for resentment.
Oh, Lady Leonora, every word
That I have spoken has more tortured me
To speak than you to hear, yet they are said,
And they were truthful words. There is the
proof!

You were the model for that statue! You!
I thought your soul and form alike were perfect!
(*Passionately*) There is the perfect form! Aye,
that is faultless!

The soul! God's pity on the soul—not man's!
For men do not forgive!

LEONORA (*indignantly*)

You still believe
That I posed for Cellini?

MARSILIO

'Tis your form !
Its lines are printed on my memory—
[*She shrinks back, confused.*]
I cannot be deceived !

LEONORA

Silence! The Duke!

[*Enter DUKE COSIMO and RICCIO, U. R. E.*]

DUKE (*cordially, taking and holding MARSILIO'S
hand*)

You have succeeded, Prince of Perombino !
'Tis a good seaport town you hold. Its strength
Will count in our alliance. We are friends !
Tell me, was there not something—ah, a jewel!—
You much admired that I promised you.
Well, Leonora ! You showed him that gem!

LEONORA

Uncle!

DUKE (*suddenly seeing Andromeda*)

What's this? That brilliant knave, Cellini!

Yet he must hang unless that ring's produced!

LEONORA

I shall bring you, my lord, your gem collection.

[*Exit LEONORA. Enter BANDINELLO.*]

BANDINELLO (*sinking on his knee and kissing the
DUKE'S hand*)

My honored master! My most generous patron!
The heart of Bandinello thrills with joy
To learn you have recovered health!

DUKE

That marble!

[*BANDINELLO hastily rises.*]

'Tis in your mind, I doubt not.

BANDINELLO

Nay, my lord,

There have I vision of a rare creation
Which in Carrara marble will delight
Your Excellency! May I have the block?

[*CELLINI enters quietly, remaining un-
noticed.*]

DUKE

I meant it for that rascal, Benvenuto.

RICCIO (*not perceiving CELLINI*)

If he is hanged because he stole your ring,
How can he use the marble, noble Duke?

DUKE

True, true! Ha! in my illness I forgot
To count time closely on him. Have him summoned!

CELLINI (*bowing profoundly*)

My lord, I am rejoiced at your recovery.

DUKE (*stiffly*)

You might have more occasion to rejoice
Had I my ring recovered! I gave you
More than sufficient time to find it. Now
Patience is at an end. The ring, Cellini!

[FEDERIGA *enters quietly, and, startled to see
others present, hides behind the screen.*

CELLINI (*indignantly*)

That ring was stolen from me, Duke of Florence!
By whom, I do not know. I have learned
nothing.

RICCIO

Come, man, confess! Rings do not walk away,
Despising well-locked doors like yours, Cellini.

BANDINELLO

Should he confess, illustrious Duke, then I,
At whom he has so often cast vile insults,
Will ask for mercy for him. Why? Because,
Altho' his work is bad beyond redemption,
Cellini did aspire to be a sculptor.

CELLINI (*controlling himself*)

My lord, to die is nothing. I have faced
Death in a hundred forms and laughed at him.
But to stand here and let that hypocrite,
[*Pointing to BANDINELLO.*
That maker of bad statues, criticize
Work done with Heaven's favor—hear him utter
Sacrilege, nor run my blade thro' him!—
(*Deferentially*) That is the highest tribute I have
paid,
Ever, to your illustrious presence.

DUKE

Silence!

It matters not that you hate one another—
That but proves both are artists. 'Tis the ring
I want!

CELLINI (*earnestly*)

Then join me in my prayer for inspiration
Asking that it commence where thought has
ended,
For reasoning has led to naught.

RICCIO (*spitefully*)

Mere words!

CELLINI (*to DUKE*)

In all my life I never was so earnest.
Think what this means to me! My honor
Questioned by one as low as Riccio?

DUKE

Unto our every interrogation
Have you replied it was a robbery;
But never once has it appeared to us
Why you have steadily maintained a silence
When the Bargello sought from you the facts
On which to found a full investigation.

CELLINI

Because the man who would have been suspected
I felt was innocent—and now I know it.

DUKE

Toward whom, then, would the facts have pointed?

CELLINI

No one!

DUKE

We give you every chance. Could there be one Among your household?

CELLINI (*half despairingly*)

I had even sent

My model Federiga from my workshop.

I was asleep. It was some stranger entered.

MARSILIO (*starting forward*)

Duke Cosimo!

DUKE

My Lord of Perombino!

MARSILIO

Cellini is mistaken. I was there.

I bear no love to him for best of reasons.

Standing prepared to give him satisfaction,

I call him traitor, scoundrel! I believe

That he would steal a jewel from a friend—

CELLINI

Marsilio!

MARSILIO

But not from an employer!

I was not there alone! 'This Federiga—

[FEDERIGA, *badly frightened, peeps from
behind the screen.*

CELLINI

She did not take it! That fool girl loves me!

DUKE

Yet she may give a clew. Has she been ques-
tioned?

CELLINI

My lord, it was not she—could not have been.
Since I have been here she has called to see me
A dozen times, weeping in her old fashion,
Because I told her she was fit to be
The model for a man like Bandinello.

[BANDINELLO *protests.*

I know these women! They are jealous crea-
tures!

Why, only yesterday I caught her seeking

A chance—I would have killed her!—to destroy
Andromeda! Or else why was she near it?

'Tis jealousy!

MARSILIO (*aside, fervently*)

I would that she had done it!

CELLINI

It was not she! Dismiss all thought of her.

DUKE

You do not help us. Who could it have been?

[*Enter LEONORA with casket of gems, U. R. E.*

LEONORA (*to DUKE*)

Here is your gem collection.

DUKE (*placing it on a small table, he
addresses MARSILIO significantly*)

Tell me, Prince,

If it contains the jewel you admired.

'Twere well you take to Perombino something

By which you may remember our fair Florence.

[*Enter DA TROTTI, U. R. E., bearing a bag
of coin.*

MARSILIO

To let your kindness rob you of one gem

Were poor repayment of my obligation.

[*The DUKE regards MARSILIO in amazement.*

DA TROTTI

Your Excellency, for the words I speak
I risk Cellini's anger. I have lived
Not quite as many years as some may think,
But long enough to study many men—
Not to omit some women. I will swear
My good friend Benvenuto has no knowledge
To help locate the ring. Yet it is gone.
You, my lord Duke, must certainly not suffer
The loss of its true value. Benvenuto,
You must not think my act can stain your honor.
See! Here are thirty thousand ducats—more,

[*Showing bag of money.*

Perhaps, than it is worth. I seek to buy
Your title to the stone, your Excellency,
And then give Benvenuto all the time
He may require to pursue the search.

DUKE (*calculatingly*)

'Twas worth full five and thirty thousand. Yet
Because I like your loyalty to friendship

I shall accept, provided that this figure
[*Pointing to Andromeda.*]
Goes with the money.

MARSILIO (*aside*)

Nay, a curse goes with it!

CELLINI (*proudly*)

It matters not who owns it, so it be
Preserved. 'Tis yours, my lord. If I permit
Da Trotti to become my creditor
'Tis with the reservation I maintain
The right with any man of any rank,
Duke Cosimo, in fair fight to defend
The honor of Cellini.

DA TROTTI (*hanging purse on arm near covered
hand*)

Here, my lord,
You have your ring's equivalent in money
And a great masterpiece! They go together!

DUKE

Friend Benvenuto, draw aside the folds!
Let me be first to see your splendid work.

LEONORA

Not so, my lord. I have seen part of it.

MARSILIO (*puzzled*)

A part of it !

LEONORA

The Duchess being with me,
As his reward for services I valued
I let him make a copy of this arm.

DUKE

Your arm! Aye, 'tis a fair one.

[*Looking at statue.*

What a form!

Is't possible this world contains its like?
What say you, Prince, to this?

MARSILIO (*sadly*)

I think such beauty
Were fit but to embody the pure souls
That dwell in Paradise—not those of earth.

DUKE (*pointing to the bag of money which hangs
so as to hold wrappings on the hand*)

Such detail! See, this bag has caught and holds
The wrappings on the hand. Remove it.

[*The missing ring is on the finger.*

ALL (*amazed*)

What !!

CELLINI (*triumphantly*)

The ring! How came it here? (*Inspiration-ally*) A miracle!

[*Turning to* MARSILIO.

You scoffed, boy, at my aureole—behold
How Heaven still regards me with its favor
In spite of all my sins!

RICCIO (*pointing to Cellini*)

He put it there!

CELLINI

You rascal! What a mind you have to say that!
It must have been an angel, placed it there!
(*Grandly*) For this I do forgive all who have
wronged me!

(*Reflectively*) Where did that angel find it?

[FEDERIGA *rushes from behind screen.*

(*Astonished*) Federiga!

FEDERIGA (*on her knees*)

Oh, Benvenuto, then you pardon me!

CELLINI (*disgustedly*)

You aided me—not something spiritual!

RICCIO (*nervously*)

What matter so the ring be found, my lord?

In spite of all this man has said against me,
I beg this miserable business be
Forgotten.

DUKE

So you have a fondness for
This wretched girl, who has so nearly caused—
Annoyance—to my good friend Benvenuto!

[*A slight pause.*]

CELLINI (*theatrically*)

Illustrious Duke of Florence, would you do
An act of perfect justice to a man
Who merits some return for heavy suffering!

DUKE

Yes, Benvenuto, you have claims upon me.

CELLINI (*pointing to Riccio*)

Here is a man I do not wholly like.

(*Lightly*) I find his face unpleasant. And there
stands

(*Earnestly*) A girl whose actions have caused me
to suffer

As I pray God I never shall again.

Now, Riccio loves her. The blind could see it.

Both should be punished. Let the two be married!

[RICCIO grasps FEDERIGA's hand, and draws her, disgusted, to his side.

DUKE (*laughing heartily*)

Ever a jester! Have your will, my friend.

As for yourself—the model of that statue

Must be the fairest woman in the land—

You marry her!

CELLINI

What! marry my own child?

MARSILIO

Cellini!

DUKE

Benvenuto!

CELLINI

Four weeks old!

DA TROTTI

Poor fellow! He has worried himself ill.

CELLINI (*enthusiastically*)

No! I have vindicated all my boasts!

I am a genius! In this brain of mine

There glows the fire celestial. To the lady

Whose beauty, grace, and purity of soul

Have stirred me to my best, I owe the arm.
Its wondrous symmetry was inspiration,
The body in its every measurement
Is in exact proportion, and hence perfect !

MARSILIO

Perfect! No wonder I thought her the model !
[He looks at LEONORA, pleading forgiveness. She fixes her gaze upon the statue.]

DUKE

You are a marvel !

CELLINI

So King Francis said.

DUKE (*irritated*)

What does France know of Art? The Duke of
Florence
Gives place to none in his appreciation!

CELLINI (*regretfully*)

And yet that piece of fine Carrara marble,
Out of which I might duplicate this triumph,
I understand is given to Bandinello.

DUKE

For one of his monstrosities! Absurd!

[CELLINI *salutes* BANDINELLO *profoundly*.

'Tis yours! Nor is that all. While I was ill

The Legate of the Pope departed. Well,

If he should come again I have more jewels—

That figure now in wax give me in marble.

[*Giving him the ring.*

(*Graciously*) When you gaze on this ring, remem-

ber Cosimo!

CELLINI

My generous patron! I forget King Francis!

DUKE

And you, dear Prince! You, too, must have a

token

Of Cosimo's true friendship.

[*Pointing to* LEONORA *and casket.*

Make selection.

MARSILIO (*fervently*)

My noble friend and ally, if I ask

The rarest gem in Florence as your gift,

May it be granted the more readily

Because it will be held by one who deems it

His to be cherished for eternity.

DUKE (*smiling*)

I would be generous, but your avowal
That you desire the choicest of all gems
Really compels some hesitation. Tell me,
My Leonora, what would you advise?

MARSILIO (*approaching her beseechingly*)

Dear lady, if you know how greatly I
Aspire to be held worthy of such a gift,
How deeply I regret what I have done
To make me less deserving of it, you
Would, in a spirit of forgiveness, say,
“ Make Perombino its custodian!”

LEONORA (*archly*)

Good uncle, I ask you, to whose nice judgment
All Italy defers, to give advice.
Tell me how I should counsel you to answer
Marsilio's request?

DUKE (*laughing*)

Why, bid me grant it.

LEONORA

Since such is your desire, I do so!

[*Puts her hand in* MARSILIO'S.]

CELLINI (*cordially*)

Boy, in your heart you always loved Cellini!

Come, I forgive you! How could I expect

That you would guess the story of my statue?

(*Humorously*) Here is a ring fit for the Pope
himself,

[*All laugh.*

And here's a finger it will grace. (*To MAR-*
SILIO) You surely

Do not object because I note its beauty?

Wear it, sweet lady. Hold it as a token

(*Gravely*) That I have learned to understand the
worth

Of woman's grace and purity! Yes, I!

DUKE (*laughing*)

Upon my faith, were I not the most constant

Of husbands I would think of beauty too.

Come, Benvenuto, 'tis a time for marrying!

Tell us, what are your plans?

CELLINI (*throwing his arm around Andromeda*)

I am a sculptor!

THE CURTAIN FALLS

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